(a) whether Government have taken any decision on sending Indian troops to Iraq on the basis of the USA request;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether, the UN Security Council Resolution 1483 implies induction of Indian forces in Iraq to have an explicit UN mandate;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons for not rejecting the decision of sending troops outright?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (f) Yes, Government's decision of July 14 is as follows:-

"The Government of India has given careful thought to the question of sending Indian troops to Iraq.

Our longer term national interest, our concern for the people of Iraq, our long-standing ties with the Gulf region as a whole, as well as our growing dialogue and strengthened ties with the U.S. have been key elements in this consideration.

India remains ready to respond to the urgent needs of the Iraqi people for stability, security, political progress and economic reconstruction. Were there be an explicit UN mandate for the purpose, the Government of India could consider the deployment of our troops in Iraq.

In the meanwhile, Government of India is ready to contribute to the restoration of infrastructure, medical, health, educational, communications and other civilian needs of the Iraqi people. As a concrete gesture of our support to the Iraqi people, we are already planning to set up, jointly with Jordan, a hospital in Najaf in Iraq."

Status of Security Council Seat for India at UN

505. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is seriously lobbying for the seat at Security Council;

(b) if so, what is the present position regarding our nomination to security council;

(c) whether it is a fact that Pakistan is severely opposing our candidature and is trying for its own entry;

(d) if so, what lobbying is being done by India with super powers to get an entry into Security Council; and

(e) by when it is likely to be decided about out nomination into the UN body?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (e) India presented its candidature to the UN for the permanent membership of the Security Council in 1994, and since then has pursued the objective at the General Assembly, in the Working Group of the U.N. on Security Council Reforms and in bilateral interactions. Discussions on this subject cover complex and contentious issue such as: the size of an expanded council, expansion in the categories of non-permanent and permanent members, the relevant criteria, the question of veto, the procedures for decisions etc. The discussions remain inconclusive. At this stage of discussions, it would be difficult to assess definitely the position of an individual country regarding candidatures.

Several countries, including most of the Permanent Members, have openly expressed support for India's candidature, either in the UN or in the context of bilateral exchanges. However, it is difficult to anticipate any specific time frame for the reform or expansion of the Security Council.

Visit of National Security Advisor to New York

506. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's National Security Advisor and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister visited New York few weeks ago;